

Planning a Funeral - Memorial Service at Palm West Community Church



A funeral or memorial service is a service that celebrates the life of your loved one and proclaims the Christian belief in eternal life. We honestly face the reality of death and grief, while witnessing to the Christian hope of resurrection and life after death. We seek to remember and celebrate your loved one as God is praised and thanked for the gift their life represents.

It is our hope that when your time of grief and loss comes, the funeral or memorial service will be a part of the healing process. Grief affects everyone differently and your faith journey through it will be done in your own way. God wants to lead you back to wholeness and our church will keep you in prayer as you move through this difficult time.

"Blessed are those who mourn; they shall find comfort."
Matthew 5:4

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What Should I Do When My Loved One Dies?

We share the conviction that in life and death we belong to God.
And as your family of faith, Palm West Community Church shares your sorrow at this difficult time.

We desire to serve you and pay tribute to your loved one with a Christ-centered service that will bring the comfort, assurance and hope of the Christian faith.

Meeting with the Family

Call the church office at 623-546-2980 as soon as possible. One of the pastors will work with the family and/or the funeral home staff to make these arrangements.

- Meet with the family to discuss the Funeral or Memorial service, hymns or songs, special music and message.
- Other details include:
 - Plan any visitation before or after the service
 - Flowers, picture display, card basket, and guest register
 - Help with writing an obituary
 - Assist in plans for committal and reception

The Worship Service

A Christian Funeral or Memorial Service is an opportunity to worship God for his faithfulness and love, lift up the assurances of the Scriptures, and offer a brief meditation. Many families desire a eulogy of their loved one which can be presented by a pastor or a member of the family. The service usually lasts less than an hour.

- Services may take place in our Worship Center, at a Funeral Home, or at graveside.
- Wherever the service is held, it is appropriate that the casket be closed prior to the service.
- We can provide a worship bulletin containing the order of service, a brief obituary, a list of family members and service participants.

Our Worship Center seating capacity is 450; and Hoover Hall can comfortably seat about 300. Our instrumental staff organist and/or pianist are available for the service.

What to Consider for a Memorial or Funeral Service

All memorial or funeral services are worship services. We give glory to God for salvation, hope in eternal life, and seek God's comfort for those who remain.

The service itself combines appropriate scriptures, hymns, or special songs that may have been your deceased loved one's choosing or your own. We encourage family members to offer selections that may reflect the life and purpose of the loved one being remembered.

The church will provide our staff organist or pianist or both at the desire of the family, and we will provide an appropriate musician if our staff is not available.

Some families choose a representative to share reflections on behalf of the family and/or read a eulogy that is prepared by the family. Also, some families want us to invite any who attend to share brief words of remembrance.

We encourage families to consider utilizing the entryway welcome table and our easels to display favorite representations of the loved one (i.e., photographs, handcrafts, a symbol of their hobbies or interests).

We provide a basket for friends to leave greeting cards and notes to the family. If requested, we can provide a guest register for all attendees to sign.

Veterans may be honored by the American Flag ceremony presented by local military on behalf and arranged by the Funeral Home.

Our media team produces a recording of any funeral/memorial service and by request will make up to seven copies on CD-ROM free of charge.

If a reception will follow the service, we generally have the family leave the service first so that they can take their place in the Fellowship Hall before the guests arrive to greet them.

Memorial Slide Show Guidelines

You may want to present a slide show of your loved one's life as part of the prelude or in the flow of the service. The church staff is capable and available to produce this for you. Here are some helpful guidelines:

1. Tell the story of your loved one's life in pictures.
2. Choose between 40 and 45 pictures (about six minutes of viewing time). Some families are able to scan their own photos into files, otherwise the church staff will scan and return these pictures to you. Bring your pictures to the church office at your first possible opportunity.
3. Indicate the order you want the pictures to be arranged.
4. As you choose pictures, consider these themes:
 - + Baby / parents / siblings
 - + Childhood / school days / at play
 - + Teen years
 - + Sports, music, art, drama, other activities
 - + Young adulthood
 - + Military service
 - + Marriage / family
 - + Job / business / academic accomplishments
 - + Special recognitions / joys
 - + Noteworthy travels / vacations
 - + Church activities / missions trips

Avoid choosing pictures

- + that do not include your loved one
 - + where faces are too small to distinguish individuals
 - + of poor quality (over or under exposed, blurry, poorly composed, etc.)
5. Music soundtrack – if a music soundtrack is desired, provide a Compact Disc(s) or mp3 files of three recorded pieces. The Pianist or Organist can play during the slide presentation as well.
 6. Choose an appropriate last slide.

Note:

If you choose to scan the pictures yourself (or your tech savvy relative or friend), save each scanned picture as a .jpg format file in the highest resolution possible. Save these files to a disc or flash drive and bring it to the church office at your first possible opportunity. You are also welcome to produce your own digital slide show. It must be compatible with Microsoft Windows-based computers.

Reception

- Upon request, we can provide a reception following a memorial service which can be a light meal or dessert refreshments. We can discuss what you have in mind and communicate that to our Fellowship and Care Ministry.
- While no fee is required for less than 50 people, a donation to cover food expenses for larger groups is appreciated.

Committal and/or Graveside

A committal is a very brief service generally held at graveside and can occur immediately following a funeral or memorial service or at a later date as arranged with the cemetery.

A Word about Cremation

- Since Christians from the beginning have believed *“what is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable ... it is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body”* (I Corinthians 15:42), cremation or the contribution of the remains for medical research presents no problem to the Christian faith.
- The church maintains a Columbarium for the inurnment of cremains for its members and regular attenders. Arrangements may be made with our Columbarium Ministry.
- Inurnment services may take place immediately following a service if prior arrangements have been made, or they can be scheduled at any time in the future once the niche application is completed.

*“Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled
and do not be afraid.” - John 14:27*



Follow-up

We encourage all those who have experienced grief and loss of a loved one to participate in our *GriefShare* program. *GriefShare* is for people grieving the death of a loved one. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member or friend, this is a place where you can find people who understand the deep hurt you feel.

GriefShare is a Christ-centered small group that meets at various times throughout the year in 13-week sessions.



Each *GriefShare* session includes a video seminar featuring top experts on grief recovery, plus real-life case studies and reenactments. After each video presentation, we spend time as a group discussing what was presented and how it applies to what is going on in our lives.

We are grateful to have **Bob & Joyce Davis** as our *GriefShare* Coordinators. Both have participated in Griefshare for the past few years, and have great hearts for serving the Lord and encouraging people experiencing grief.

Palm West Funeral Team

This ministry includes the pastors, musicians, fellowship and care ministries, and other volunteers who help coordinate all of the elements for funerals and memorial services at Palm West Community Church. For contact information, please call the church office at 623.546.2980.

Suggested Donations

We appreciate all donations to be paid on the same day as the service. One check may be made payable to PWCC. Fees for service are not tax deductible.

Please use the church's standard form below and submit it with your check to indicate how that amount is to be distributed.

Checklist for Function Planning

(All fees are suggested and negotiable in consultation with a pastor)

Function name _____

Name of responsible party _____

Phone and or email _____

Date and time of Function _____

Primary Services for Function (fee/payment type for services or products rendered is not tax-deductible)

Use of Worship Center/Hoover Hall Fee _____
(There is no fee for member or regular attendees; for non-members, suggested fee is \$300 for Worship Center and \$200 fee for Hoover Hall)

Musicians: (May involve independent contracts)

Vocalist (suggested \$50) Fee _____

Pianist (suggested \$100) Fee _____

Organist (suggested \$100) Fee _____

Audio Visual Services (suggested \$75) Fee _____
Includes audio recordings of the service.

Bulletins (suggest donation if more than 150) Fee _____

Other _____ Fee _____

Reception: (If less than 50 attendees, recommend \$0) Fee _____

Additional offering if any (may be tax- deductible if in addition to fees and to qualified entry) Fee _____

Grand total amount _____